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DDSGT-083-85

1 February 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, Security Committee  
FROM: James V. Hirsch  
Associate Deputy Director for Science and Technology  
SUBJECT: Leaks of Classified Information

1. It seems to me that we in government unwittingly aid one of the major sources of leaks of classified information we suffer from today. The source I refer to is the group of self-proclaimed intelligence pundits associated with specialized study centers or institutes. These individuals openly publish or discuss details of our collection sources and analysis results. The ones who can do the most damage are those who have had prior legitimate access to classified information. This inside knowledge is often used to pick selectively from the media that information that is very close to the truth for use in public unclassified papers or discussions. In this way erroneous data are gradually sifted out of these analysts' treatment of a given classified issue. Some of these analysts have been careful to identify prior open sources for their specific studies. I know of one case of a strategic analyst, a foreigner, who managed to associate himself with U.S. think-tanks and, by insinuation of SCI access, managed to elicit classified information in his discussions. Recently, a subpanel on technical collection of intelligence of an unclassified symposium on strategic issues advertised the participation of an individual who used to work with one of our contractors and who held a number of our SCI clearances.

2. The currency of this particular source of intelligence leakage constantly decays without access to inside information. If we could isolate these sources of leaks from so-called unclassified governmental or government contractor interaction, their effectiveness would be significantly diminished. It doesn't make sense for one part of the government to rail against intelligence leakage while other parts cheerfully participate in open forums with individuals who systematically use such exchanges to confirm or deny classified information already in the public domain. It would seem prudent for us to investigate ways in which we can prevent government and government contractor participation in unclassified conferences when there is a risk that by doing so we could aid in verifying the accuracy of intelligence information appearing in unclassified published materials. We gain little or nothing of substance from many of these exchanges, especially when technical collection of intelligence is the topic. Would it be possible

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for your committee to develop guidelines to limit the participation of Intelligence Community organizations and their contractors in unclassified symposia, conferences or technical meetings dealing with intelligence when such participation could aid in establishing the credibility of known leakers of classified information?



James V. Hirsch

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